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Destinations

Tucson Department
of Transportation
Bringing Life To Transportation

Vol. 2: No. 4

The latest information from the Tucson Department of Transportation

Summer 2005

www.dot.tucsonaz.gov

New Permitting Program will Ease Congestion, Increase Safety

Traffic congestion is a fact of life in fast-growing cities like Tucson. It often gets worse whenever construction activities restrict the full use of roadways, sidewalks, and transit zones. Tucson Department of Transportation's (TDOT) new Traffic Management for Temporary Work Zones program will ease this problem by improving planning, application, and oversight of traffic control management in work areas.

Before the program was implemented in May, permits for traffic barricades were issued free of charge. Under the new system, permits will be available for a fee, depending on the type of permit needed and how long it is used. The money raised through the fees will be used to fund additional TDOT staff to manage the program. This change should encourage permit applicants to be more specific about when they need traffic barricades in place and quicker to finish their work and return the roadway to normal use, says TDOT's Deputy Director Steve Pageau.

Although the program was developed specifically for Tucson, it is based on other successful traffic

management programs around the country. "We've borrowed from the best of their ideas to create a local program that will mitigate construction impacts to the traveling public and businesses," Pageau explained. "The program will be a valuable tool for helping manage traffic congestion and increase safety."

For more information about the Traffic Management for Temporary Work Zones Program, or to receive a brochure explaining the program, call Billie Lee at 791-4259, ext. 310.

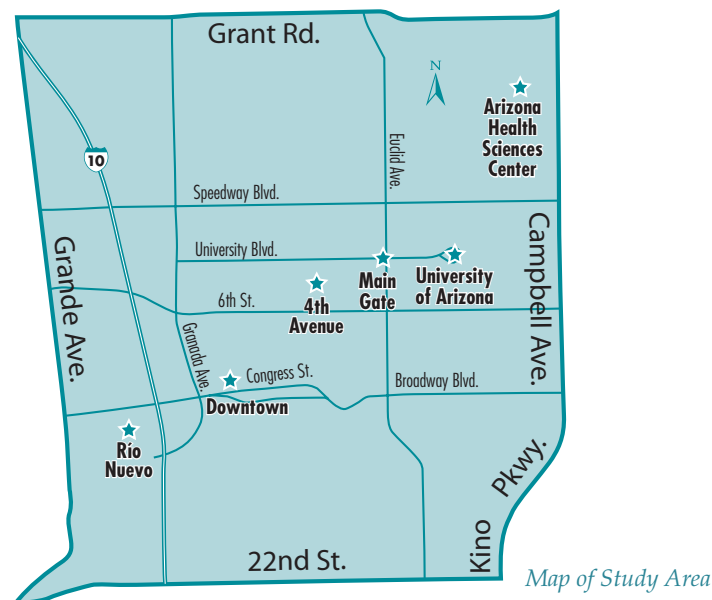


Road construction is inevitable, but the City of Tucson's new barricade program better manages the roadway restrictions associated with these improvements.

'Alternatives Analysis' Solving Central City Transit Needs

Tucson is a rapidly growing city that needs better transit – now and in the future. To help address this need, TDOT and the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) have partnered in a Major Transit Investment Study to identify potential transit solutions in the center of town. The team is evaluating possible routes and modes of transit to connect University Medical Center and the University of Arizona with Downtown and the west side elements of Río Nuevo.

The study area is bounded by Grant Road to the north, 22nd Street to the South, Grande Avenue to the west and Campbell Avenue to the east. Within this area, the system would provide additional transit options to existing public transit, giving people another option for getting around quickly and efficiently without having to drive.



The team first conducted a survey to gather public input on transit issues in Tucson. We received hundreds of helpful responses that are being used to guide the rest of the study. Next the team will look at potential routes and transit methods, which have already been narrowed down to modern streetcars and bus circulators. The possibility of incorporating a historic trolley system as a part of either main operation is also being considered.

Participation by citizens in the study is important. To ensure that a locally preferred method and route are recommended to the FTA upon completion of the study, a community liaison group has been formed. The group, made up of stakeholders who live in the study area, meets every two to three months. Additional



opportunities for public input have been provided through two public open houses (with more to come), a web site (www.tucsontransitstudy.com), an email address (information@tucsontransitstudy.com), and an information phone line (520-624-5656) to allow citizens to communicate their comments and questions.

Thoroughly researching all transit options and balancing the community's diverse needs is a major undertaking. But in the end, the hard work will pay off by helping create a more livable community for all of us.

Watch for Construction on...

LOCATION	TYPE OF WORK	END DATE
Arroyo Chico Wash, Alvernon to Rosemont	Drainage Improvements	Jan. 2006
Harrison Rd., Speedway to Old Spanish Trail	Widening to 4 Lane Divided, Harrison/Broadway Intersection Improvements	Begins Sept. 2005
Tucson Blvd., Speedway to Grant	Overlay and Resurfacing	Sept. 2005
Tucson Blvd., Ft. Lowell to Prince	Overlay and Resurfacing	Sept. 2005
Drexel, Calle Santa Cruz to Tucson Blvd.	Overlay and Resurfacing	Sept. 2005
Broadway and Plumer	Bus Pullout Lanes	July 2005
Ft. Lowell and Country Club	Bus Pullout Lanes	July 2005

During these improvements, business access will be maintained to the extent possible with only short, infrequent closures when necessary. Motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians traveling in the work area are asked to please obey all traffic control signs and be alert for construction equipment and personnel working in the area. For more information, visit the TDOT website at www.dot.tucsonaz.gov.

Transportation Goes Downtown

As a regular feature of *Destinations*, we'll be focusing on transportation projects that are underway or about to begin Downtown.

Pennington Street Garage Will Open in August

Major progress has been made on the 750-space Pennington Street Garage, located at the southwest corner of Sixth Avenue and Pennington Street. The state-of-the-art facility is on schedule to open late this summer, bringing convenient parking to the east end of Downtown. The garage will also be an attractive addition to its surroundings, thanks to its colorful art deco design and nearly 12,000 square feet of ground floor retail space.



A crane places the last concrete section on to the new Pennington Street Garage at the southwest corner of Pennington Street and 6th Avenue.

Underpass Project Begins this Fall

Work will begin in the fall on the new 4th Avenue Underpass, creating a modern gateway to Downtown while linking it to the University area and 4th Avenue commercial district. The new structure - situated just to the east of the existing underpass - will have two traffic lanes, bike lanes, ADA-compliant sidewalks and a route for the trolley. When this \$20.5 million project is complete, 4th Avenue will extend all the way to Broadway Boulevard and the intersection of 4th Avenue and Congress Street will be entirely rebuilt.

The old underpass, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, will be completely restored and turned into a pedestrian-only walkway linking 4th Avenue and Downtown.

Bus Shelter Program Wins State and Regional Awards

The City of Tucson's Bus Shelter Program, which is installing and refurbishing more than 1,200 bus shelters throughout Tucson, has won two major awards from the American Public Works Association (APWA). The program won the State-level prize for projects valued between \$2 and \$10 million. It was also named "Public Works Project of the Year" for 2005 by APWA's Southern Arizona Branch in the same category.

The Bus Shelter Program began in the fall of 2002 as part of the City's plan to improve Tucson's public transportation system by creating more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly streets, enhancing

roadways to include landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, and bus stops, and promoting alternative modes of transportation. By the time the Bus Shelter Program wraps up in 2012, Tucson will have more than 650 new bus shelters and more than 600 existing bus shelters will be completely refurbished and outfitted with trash cans, bike racks and solar security lighting.

In addition to colors and design motifs inspired by the Sonoran desert, Tucson's new and improved shelters provide cover to protect riders from the hot summer sun and solar-powered security lighting.



This enormous improvement over the standard bus bench has helped increase bus ridership in many parts of the region.

The purple "saguaro" design of the new bus shelters embraces Tucsonan's traditional values and pride of living in the southwest.

Questions? More Information?

If you have a question about Tucson's transportation or if you would like to be added to the *Destinations* mailing list, call 791-4371 or email michael.graham@tucsonaz.gov.



Word on the Street

By Jim Glock, Director, Tucson Department of Transportation

Jim Glock,
Director of TDOT

Transit is something most of us don't think about except when we need it, but Tucson's transit systems—Sun Tran and Van Tran—are two of the very best in the nation at getting people where they want to go.

In 2004, Sun Tran was recognized as the best transit system in Arizona. This year, Van Tran took that honor. The number of citizens in our region who use Sun Tran has drastically increased in the past few years, and later this year new buses will be making their ride even smoother. Even waiting for the bus has gotten easier thanks to new award-winning bus shelters (see article on page 3) that the City is constructing throughout the valley.

SunTran Celebrating 30 Years of Regional Service

In 1975, SunTran began serving Tucson and the surrounding region, providing an easy and inexpensive transportation alternative to driving a personal vehicle. Thirty years later, with skyrocketing gasoline prices and serious traffic congestion problems, SunTran is a more attractive option than ever. More and more people are getting on board – ridership has increased 13% in the past three years.

Monthly passes make riding more convenient, and the University of Arizona will pay 50% of the cost of a U|Pass for UA students, faculty, and staff.

The City of Tucson and many businesses around the region also subsidize passes for their employees through the Get on Board program.

Van Tran Wins Major Transit Award

Congratulations to Van Tran on being named Outstanding Transit Organization for 2005 by the Arizona Transit Association (AzTA)! As Tucson's Complementary Paratransit Service, Van Tran provides transportation to disabled persons who are unable to ride Sun Tran. Ridership is increasing at about 14% annually and the system will carry approximately 400,000 citizens this year. Van Tran received the AzTA award because its service has improved dramatically since Professional Transit Management (PTM) took over operations in May 2004. Since then, denial rates (when Van Tran is unable to accommodate a

ride request) have been cut to zero (from previous highs near 20%) and on-time performance has increased from 80% to 95%. The vans also travel three to four times farther than comparable transit operations without accidents, and they're reliable - traveling approximately six times farther than other fleets without mechanical problems. Other recent improvements include shorter customer service telephone hold times (less than 30 seconds), and a variety of innovative new computerized services.

Road Recovery Program Highlights

Since the Road Recovery Program began last summer, TDOT has committed \$25 million, budgeted by Tucson's Mayor and Council, to numerous projects across the City to improve the condition of streets, construct sidewalks, install lighting, and repair and improve median landscaping.

During the last twelve months, approximately 50 miles of streets have been resurfaced and 28 miles of sidewalks have been completed to improve safety and mobility. Streetlights have been added to one and a half miles of streets to improve driver and pedestrian safety. Nearly three and a half miles of median landscaping, including irrigation, plants, and groundcover are being improved to reinforce our investment in attractive facilities.

The Program has been a great boost for the community, and everyone at TDOT has enjoyed the opportunity to demonstrate the Department's ability to deliver quality transportation projects that reflect our commitment to serving the community.

Email Your Questions

If you have a question you'd like us to address in *Destinations*, email it to me at jim.glock@tucsonaz.gov. Thanks!



Tucson Department
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Destinations is produced by the Tucson Department of Transportation Public Information Office and the City of Tucson.

Para recibir esta información en español, sírvase llamar al 791-4371.